

Crown Hill Cemetery, Gateway
3402 Boulevard Place at the intersection
of 34th Street
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-57

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

CROWN HILL CEMETERY, GATEWAY

Location: 3402 Boulevard Place at the intersection of 34th Street, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

Present Owner: The Crown Hill Cemetery, an Indiana Not-for-Profit Corporation, 700 West 38th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Present Use: Entrance to the Crown Hill Cemetery.

Statement of Significance: The Crown Hill Cemetery Gateway was designed by Adolf Scherrer, an Indianapolis architect of Swiss origins. It was completed in November 1885 in time for the funeral of Vice-President Thomas A. Hendricks. This is an excellent example of high Victorian Gothic architectural design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date or erection: 1885 (Secretary's Record, 1863-1894, p. 404; Nicholas, p. 110).
2. Architect: Adolph Scherrer (Secretary's Record, 1863-1894, pp. 401, 403). Adolph Scherrer (d. 1925) was born in Sankt Gallen, Switzerland, and studied architecture in Vienna, Austria. He came to Indianapolis in 1872 and worked for Edwin May, architect of the present state capitol, supervising the completion of the building after May's death. Scherrer's work in Indianapolis includes the Mannerchor Building (HABS-100), City Hospital, and the Elks Club Building. (Burns, p. 199).

Vonnegut and Bohn were architects for the porter's lodge addition (Record, Crown Hill, No. 2, p. 113).

3. Original and subsequent owners: See HABS report on Crown Hill Cemetery Chapel and Vault (IND-58) for information on acquisition of land for the entire cemetery. The following deed pertains only to the land upon which the Gateway was erected.

1863 Warrantry Deed, Dec. 24, 1863, recorded Jan. 15, 1864, in Deeds Book MM, p. 93. Henry and Levi Wright to Crown Hill Cemetery, 6.10 acres.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: E. F. Gabel (Secretary's Record, 1863-1895, p. 404). Porter's Lodge addition, Branak Brothers. (Record, Crown Hill No. 2, p. 119).
5. Original plan and construction: On June 23, 1884, the Board of Managers of Crown Hill Cemetery decided to build an "entrance gate and gatekeepers residence" on the "Avenue entrance from Illinois Street." A competitive Gateway program was initiated and for two days the News Journal and Sentinel ran an advertisement inviting architects to submit plans, specifications and estimates for an "entrance gate built of stone and iron conveniently arranged for the purpose intended." Three designs were submitted: one by Hodgson, Wallingford and Stan and two by Adolf Scherrer. On Sept. 2, 1884, parts of both Scherrer's designs were selected: the first design for a gateway; the second design for a residence-office building. By December 5, 1884, contractors proposals had been submitted based on Scherrer's drawings and specifications for the gateway. E. F. Gabel's proposal of \$19,765 for construction of the Gateway was accepted. Scherrer's fee was four per cent of the construction cost. On July 14, 1885, the Board of Managers authorized Scherrer to prepare drawings for the ironwork of the new gateway and to solicit bids on the work. On October 6, 1885, the Building Committee of the Board decided to finish the semi-circular space at the gateway with a new fence and entered into a contract for its construction. (Secretary's Report, 1863-1894, pp. 398, 400, 401, 403, 404, 405, 407, 411, 413). The gateway was hurriedly finished by November 1885 in order to be ready for the funeral of Vice-President Thomas A. Hendricks (Nicholas, p. 110; Phillips, p. 25).
6. Alterations and additions: At a meeting held March 1, 1904, the Board of Managers expressed the need for a porter's lodge at the east entrance of the cemetery. Vonnegut and Bohn, architects, were instructed to prepare detailed drawings for the lodge and to obtain cost estimates for its construction. On July 12, 1904, a contract was signed with Branak Brothers for \$4,220. (Record, Crown Hill, No. 2, pp. 112, 113, 119).

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

From the time of its dedication in 1864 the Crown Hill Cemetery was considered to be the most fashionable burial ground in Indianapolis. The graves of most of the prominent people of the city are to be found here. The Crown Hill Cemetery Gateway was completed in haste in November 1885 in readiness for the funeral of Thomas A. Hendricks. Hendricks had served both the State of

Indiana and the nation as senator, governor and finally as President Grover Cleveland's Vice-President. (Also see Bates-Hendricks House, IND-64).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds Book MM. At Recorder's Office, City-County Building, Indianapolis.

Record, Crown Hill, No. 2: Managers Meetings, first dated entry Jan. 15, 1895. At Crown Hill Cemetery office, 700 W. 38th Street, Indianapolis.

Secretary's Record 1863-1894: Proceedings of the Incorporators and Directors of Crown Hill Cemetery. At Crown Hill Cemetery office, 700 W. 38th Street, Indianapolis.

2. Secondary sources of information:

Burns, Lee. Early Architects and Builders of Indiana. Indianapolis, 1935.

Nicholas, Anna. The Story of Crown Hill. Indianapolis, 1928.

Phillips, Clifton J. Indiana in Transition. Indianapolis, 1968.

Prepared by Wesley I. Shank
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
August, 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The main entrance to the Crown Hill Cemetery is a grey limestone gateway. The gateway is composed of three compound Gothic arches of which the center arch is predominant.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Foundations: Limestone.

2. Wall construction, finish and color: Ashlar coursed grey limestone.
3. Structural system, framing: Free standing gateway of solid masonry construction.
4. Openings: Three compound Gothic-arched openings.
5. Decorative details: Each arch is supported at its base by buttresses surmounted by gablets on the gateway's eastern front, single engaged and mounted columns flank the two outer arches. A slightly taller pair of engaged and mounted columns stand on each side of the center arch. Carved leaf-form crockets decorate the edges of the gables rising above the arches; each gable is crowned by a finial. A quatrefoil design is set into each of the three tympanums over the archways. Above the buttresses separating the arches are four pinnacles. The two center ones are tall and slender and have lancet panels on all four sides. The two outer pinnacles are shorter and more solid and extremely simple. All four are capped by finials.
6. Hardware: Wrought-iron grillwork gates extend one quarter the vertical distance from the bottom of the gateway. The floral design motif is intricately and tightly woven to create a lacey wrought-iron barrier.

C. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Crown Hill Gateway faces east at the intersection of West 34th Street and Boulevard Place. The gateway stands at the easternmost boundary of the cemetery. The cemetery is composed of approximately 374 acres and is located about 3 miles north of the city center within the present city limits. Winding roads traverse the cemetery grounds and lead through a natural and informal pattern of grassy meadows and clumps of trees and shrubbery of a wide variety of species. Near the center of the west boundary is a low hill of a hundred feet or more, known as Crown Hill, from which the cemetery takes its name. The remainder of the cemetery's terrain is generally level ground.
2. Historic landscape design: The landscape of Crown Hill Cemetery is a significant example of Romantic landscape design in the Olmstead tradition.
3. Related structures: There are several significant structures at the Crown Hill Cemetery. In addition to the Gateway, Adolf Scherrer designed the 1885 high Victorian Gothic

style office building (HABS No. IND-56). This is located immediately West of the Gateway and is notable both for its architectural design and for its rich interior ornament. The high Victorian Gothic style chapel (HABS No. IND-58) was built between 1875 and 1877. It was designed by D. A. Bohlen, an Indianapolis architect of German descent and education. In 1917 D. A. Bohlen and Son were chosen to add the apse to the chapel. See the individual HABS reports on these buildings for further information. Crown Hill is topped by a memorial to the poet James Whitcomb Riley.

Prepared by Candace Reed
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
December, 1976

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperatively financed project in 1970 between the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects under the direction of Professor David R. Hermansen of Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. Professor Wesley I. Shank of Iowa State University prepared the historical data, and Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, provided the photographic record. H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA, State Preservation Coordinator, President of the Historic Landmarks Foundation, and member of the HABS Advisory Board, served as consultant throughout the project. This report was edited for HABS in 1976 by Candace Reed.